

A
SERMON
OF
Contentment.

By T. F. a Minister of Gods Word.

Phillip. 4. 11.

*I have learned in whatsoever state I
am therewith to be content.*

26



LO N D O N.

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mr696

advised



TO THE
HONORABLE
and truly noble
Sr. JOHN D'ANVERS
Knight.

Sir,

His smal Ser-
mon may well
bee termed
Zoar, for is it not a
little one? Yet it
bears good proportion
to the short text; on
which it discourses;
A 2 little

The Epistle
little auditory for
which it was compo-
sed, and your private
Chappel wherin it was
delivered. As it is
small, so it desired to be
secret, and intended
no appearance in pub-
like. Good was the
counsel wherib I aash
gave to Amaziah.
2. Cro 25.19. Abide
now at home, especi-
ally in our dangerous
dages, when all go-
ing,

Dedicatory.

ing, is censurable for
gadding abroad with-
out a necessary voca-
tion.

But seeing such
was your importunitie
to have it Printed,
that all my excuses to
the contrary, which I
could alledge with
truth, and the delays,
which I could make
with manners, might
not prevaile; I have
chosen rather to be ac-

A 3 counted

The Epistle
counted undiscreet
then uncivil, and bave
yeelded to your desire.
Surely Sir, Heaven
can never return a de-
nial to your requests
whom I presume, (by
proportion of your ear-
nest desiring so smal a
matter) to be zealous
in your desires of bier
concernment, that no-
thing but a grant can
give you satisfaction.

But the mainest
motive,

Dedicatory.

motive, next your im-
portunity, which put
me on this publike ad-
venture, was the con-
sideration of my en-
gagements to your no-
ble bounty, above my
possibility of deserving
it. The Apostle ~~saith~~
it is part of the duty of
a good servant, Tit.2.
v. 9. μὴ αὐτιλέγοντας, not
answering againe. I
must confesse my selfe
your Servant, and
therefore

The Epistle, &c.
therefore it ill besee-
med me to dislike or
mutter against any
thing you was pleased
I should doe. Thus de-
siring the continuance
and increase of all spi-
ritual and temporal
happines on your ho-
nour. I commend you
to the Almighty.

T. F.



1 TIM. 6. 6.

*But godlinesse with content-
ment is great gain.*

1. **N** the foregoing
verse, St. Paul
sets down the
worldlings prayer, creed,
and commandements;
which is their daily de-
sire, belief and practise,
and all contained in three
words; *Gain is Godlines.*
Now in my text St. Paul
counter-mines their opi-
nion

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nion, or raiseth our anti-position to batter down their false conceit, most elegantly crossing and inverting their words; *But Godliness with contentment is great gain.*

II. Take notice of the unaffected elegancy of the Apostle, how clearly and naturally with a little addition, he turns the worldlings Paradox into a Christian truth. Though Sermons may not laugh with light expressions: yet it is not unlawfull for them to smile with delightfull language; Always

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wayes provided, that the sweetnesse of the sawee spoile not the favouri-
nesse of the meat. *The Preacher* ^{Eccles. 12. 10.} *sought to finde out*
acceptable or pleasant words, that so his sound matter
might be more welcome
to his auditors.

Well, here wee have
two contrary opinions
set on foot together, *Gain*
is godlinesse, saith the
worldling, whose Gold
is his god, looking and
telling thereof, his saying
of his prayers. *Godlinesse*
is great gain, saith God him-
selfe, by the mouth of the

Apo-

III.

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Act 4: 19. Apostle. Now as Peter in another case, whether it be right to hearken unto man more then unto God, judge yee.

IV.

The text presents us with a *Bride*.

2 A Bride-maide.

3 Her great portion.

4 The present payment thereof.

1 The Bride. Godlinesse.
We need not enquire further into her Pedegree and extraction, she carries her Father in her Name, and relates to God the Author thereof.



2. The

of Contentment.

2. *The Bride-maid.* The Virgin her companion that follows her, or her inseparable attendant, Contentment. *Godlinesse with contentment.*

3. *Her great Portion,* Wherin observe the rich ware, Gain; The large measure, Great gain.

4. *The present payment.* Not in expectances or reversions; but down on the naile, presently deposited, is. *Godlines with contentment is great gain.*

Wee begin with the Bride, and in the first place let us put it to the question.

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question. What godlines
is? To which quere, se-
verall answers will be
made according to mens
severall affections. Aske
some Fryer observant,
What godlines is, and he
will tel you, the wearing
of a shirt of hair, girdle of
hemp, fasting so often in
the week, praying so of-
ten in the day with such
like Canonical devotions.
Ask the tenacious main-
tainer of some new up-
start opinion, what god-
lines is? And he will an-
swer, It is the zealous de-
fending with limb and
life

of Contentment.

life of such , and such
strangetenets, which our
fathers perchance never
hard of before; yea which
is worse, such a person
wil presume to confine
Godlines to his opinion,
as to ungodly all others
who in the least particu-
lar dissent from him. Oh,
if God should have no
more mercy on us , then
wee have charity one to
another , what would
become of us ? Indeed
Christ tearmeth his own
a little flock , *Fear not little*
flock. But if some mens
rash and cruel censures
should

Luk. 12;
32.

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should be true, the number of the godly would be so little, it would not be a flock.

5 It is a true but sad consideration how in all ages, men with more vehemency of spirit have stickled about small and unimportant points then about such matters as most concern their salvation. So that I may say (these sorrowfull times having tuned all our tongues to military phrases) some men have lavished more powder and shot in the defence of

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of some slight out-works which might well have been quitted without any losse to Religion, then in maintaing the main platform of piety, and making good that Castle of Gods service and their own salvation. Pride wil be found upon serious enquiry the principall cause hereof. For when men have studied many weeks, moneths or years about some additionall point in Divinity, they contend to have the same essentiall to salvation, because it is essentiall

B to

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to their reputation, least otherwise their discretion be called into question, for taking so much pains in vain, and spending so much precious time about a needless matter. Hereupon they labour to enhance the value of their own studies, and will have all those mynes gold, which they have discovered; yea, all their superstructures must be accounted fundamental: All their far fetcht deductions and consequential results must be reputed to be immediate

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mediate and essentiall to godlines; yea, the very life of godlines must be placed in the zealous al-serting the same.

6 But it will be the safest way for us to take a description of godlinesse from a pen infallible, impartiall, and unconcerned in our modern distractions. Even from Saint James himself. *Pure religion* (or godlinesse) and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visite the fatherlesse and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotea from the world. This

B 2 scitteth

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setteth forth the practi-
call part of Religion, and,
as I may term it, the heat
of godlinesse. To which
if the speculative part, the
light of Godlinesse bee
added, to know the only true

John 17. 3. God, and Jesus Christ whom he
hath sent, then godlines is
made compleat. And
godlinesse thus defined
admits of a latitude, so
that it may consist with
some errours in judge-
ment, and infirmities in
practise; Provided that
the godly person persists
in Faith, Hope and Cha-
rity, which hold out the
summe

of Contentment.

summe of Religion as to the necessary part there-of. As for all particular forms of Church Government, Ceremonies and outward manner of divine worship, most of them admitting of alteration upon emergencies, and variation according to circumstancies of time, place, and persons, (though these be more or lesse ornamentall to godlinesse, as they neerer or further off relate to divine institution) yet it is erronious to fixe or place the life or essence

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Act.10. of godlinesse therein.

34. Wee conclude this point with the words of Saint Peter. Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; But in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him: Yea, in one and the same nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness of what Sect, Side, Party, Profession, Opinion, Church, Congregation soever he be is accepted with him, as having true godlines in his heart which with contentment is great gain.

7 Come

of Contentment.

7 Come we now to the Brid-maid attending her, *Contentment*. Contentment is a willing submission of ours to Gods will in all conditions. I say willing; for, if it be patience perforce, *What reward have you? What doe you more then others? Doe not even the Publicans and Sinners the same?* Yea, what doe you more then Mules and Horses which being kept with Bit and Bridle quietly carry their ryders which they cannot cast off; In all conditions, patient in adversity,

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humble in prosperity ,
thankfull in both ; loo-
king neither above our
estates with the ambiti-
ous man to have it high-
er ; nor beyond it , with
the covetous man to
spread it broader ; nor
besides it with the envi-
ous man , repyning at
the estate of others : but
directly on the Portion
God hath given us , and
fully satisfied with the
same . Even justifying
Gods proceedings unto
us , though wee receive
from him what flesh &
blood would count hard

mea-

of Contentment.

measure, namely, if his
Divine wisdome should
so appoint it, *That with* Eccles. 7.
just men we perish with our 15.
righteousnesse, whilst wicked
men prolong their lives in their
wickednes.

8 Here we must take
notice of the conjuncti-
on copulative, *with*. God-
lines with contentment.
Which furnisheth us
with two profitable ob-
servations,

1. Wheresoever there
is true godlinesse
there is content-
ment.

2. Wheresoever there
is

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is true content-
ment there is god-
lines.

Like Saul and Jonathan,
^{2Sam.23} lovely and pleasant in their lives
and in their deaths they are not
divided. These twin gr-
aces alwayes go together;
True it is, that Gods chil-
dren may often have
their fits and qualms of
^{1Kin.19} discontentment, as *Elijah*
^{4.} and *Jonah* had: But this
proceeds from the im-
perfections of grace in
them; They are not dis-
contented as they are
godly, but as they have a
principle of ungodliness in

of Contentment.

in them the remnant of
carnall corruption.

9 On the other side,
no wicked man what-
soever he pretendeth, can
have true contentment.

Remarkable it is that
in the same chapter wee
finde two brethren lay-
ing claim to the grace of
contentation, but on dif-
ferent ; yea , contrary ti-
tles.

*Esau said , Gen. 33. 9. I
have enough my brother , keep
that thou hast unto thy self. Ja-
cob said , Gen. 33. 11. God
hath dealt graciously with mee
because I have enough. Now*

Esau's

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Esau's enough was indeed not enough, being onely a proud and vain-glorious brag, scorning and disdaining at the first (till importunity altered him) to receive a guift from his younger Brother, as if it were a disgrace and disparagement to his greatness to admit of any addition or accession of his estate from his inferior. *Jacobs* enough was a true and reall acknowledgement of Gods goodness to him, resting satisfied with that portion divine providence

of Contentment.

dence had allotted him ;
such contentment al-
waies goes with godlines,
and is great gain.

10 Come we now to
the Dowery ; and before
we descend to the parti-
culars thereof, take no-
tice in generall of Gods
bountifull dealing with
his servants. God might
command us to work
and give us no wages,
and most justly enjoyne
us to labour all day in his
Vineyard, and give us no
penny at night ; Very
good reason. Why should
we expect to receive
profit

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profit by him, who return no profit to him.

Luke 17. 20. When yee have done all those things which are commanded you: say, Wee are unprofitable servants, wee have done that which was our duty to doe; Saul did not give but take

1 Sam. 18. 25. a dowry with his daughter, and it is observable that 100 of foreskins onely were required of David, but he gave 200 for her. Such was the super-errogation of his valour; love and loyalty especially when joined together, never give scant measure. God in like

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like manner might expect that wee should give him a portion for the attaining of godliness; All wee can doe all wee can suffer is too little to purchase so precious a grace. Yet see the goodness of God, who knowing he is to deal with such dull workmen, who will take pains no longer then they are paid, whets us on with reward in his service.

11. Here I deny not but it is lawfull to look on those blessings and benefits which God reacheth

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eth out to us for his service; Moses himself had respect unto the recompence of reward. But two things we must take heed of; First that wee receive this reward in notion and nature of a meere gratuity, not exactly merited by the condignity of our performances, and onely due unto us by the vertue of Gods free promise and not our deserts. Secondly, that as we look on the reward, so wee look through and beyond it. It being a good Inn for our desires to bait

Hebr. 11. 26.

of Contentment.

bait at, but a bad home
for them to lodge in;
Let us labour to devest
our souls of mercenary
thoughts, and learn to
serve God for himself;
Active was the affection
of *Sechem* to *Dinah*, as ap-
pears by his request to ^{Gen. 34.}
_{11, 12.} *Jacob* and his sonnes. Let
me finde grace in your eyes, and
what yee shall say unto mee, I
will give. Ask me never so
much dowry and gift, and I
will give according as yee shall
say unto me: But give me the
Damosel to wife. Oh, that
our hearts were but
wrought to this holy

C content-

A Sermon

temper, that we should desire godlinesse on any terms, undergo any hard-ship, though there were neither Hell to punish, nor Heaven to reward. However great is Gods goodnes, who knowing whercof wee are made, and remembryng that we are but dust, is pleased to spurre us on in the rase of piety with a reward propounded, godlines with contentment is great gain.

¶ 2 So much in generall, That there is a Dowry; Now in particular

of Contentment.

cular what is the dovvry
of godlinessse. It is great
gain.

Great gain, of what? Let
Saint Paul himself, who
wrote this Epistle tell us, Object.
when he cast up his au-
dit, what profit he got by
the profession of Piety.
*In labours more abundant, in
stripes above measure, in prisons* ^{2Cor.11}
more frequent, in deaths often. ^{23.}
Where is the gain, all this
while? Perchance it fol-
lows, We will try an-
other verse. *In journeying of-*
ten, in perils of waters, in perils ^{Vat.26.}
of Robbers, in perils by mine
own Country-men, in perils by
C 2 the

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the Heathen, in perils in the City, in perils in the Wildernes, in perils in the Sea, in perils amongst false brethren. Where is the gain all this while? you will say, these were but the Apostles adventures, his rich return (slow but sure) will come at last. Once more we will try.

In wearinesse, and painfulnesse, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakednesse. The further we go, the lesse gain we find. *Cushai said unto David,* *May all the Enemies of my Lord the King be as the*

of Contentment.

the young man *Absalom* is. But if this be gain, May all the enemies of God and goodnes have plenty thereof. It will never sink into a worldlings head that godlinesse is gain, whilst the grandedes of piety are found so poore, *Elijah* begging food of a Widdow, *Peter* without gold or silver; Our Saviour himself not having where to lay his head.

It is confess that the *Answe.* doctrine in the text, can in no wise be made good according to the princi-

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bles of flesh and blood.

Our Saviour said unto

John 18. 36. *Pilate, My kingdome is not of
this world.*

So the sense and interpretation of my text is not of this world, is not carnall but spiritual, not temporal but eternal. This will plainly appear, if these two particulars be well weighed.

1 What the world counts gain, is losse,

2 What the world counts losse is gaine.

What the world counts gain is losse. For what will it profit a man if he win the whole world, and loose

bis

of Contentment.

is own soule. Most poore is the condition of those who have plenty of worldly wealth, and are not rich towards God; Coun- Luk. 12.
try people having a peice ^{21.}
of light gold use to fill the Indentures thereof with dirt, so to make it the heavier; But wisemen wil not take dirt for gold in payment. It seems in like manner that wicked men being sensible that they want waight in the scales of the sanctuary, (Tekel thou art weighed in the ^{Dan. 5.} _{27.} ballance and found too light) offset purpose load them-

C 4 selves

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Hab. 2.6 selves with *thick clay*. But all will not make them currant in Gods sight, for

Prov. 11. 4. *riches availe not in the day of*

wrath. They are long in getting with much pains, hard in keeping with much care, quick in losing with more sorrow.

Wherefore as the Apostle ^{1 Tim. 6. 20.} *mensions Science falsely so called*, so this is gain falsely so called by men.

13 Secondly, They ~~nicke~~-name that losse which is gain in very deed, such were all those sanctified afflictions which Saint Paul suffered.

ed.

of Contentment.

ed. It is confess that
thornes and thistles had
never grown in the
world, had *Adam* stood in
his integrity, yet some
of them since mans fall
cannot well be wanted;
Holy thistle (we know)
hath a Soveraign vertue,
and sweet bryer hath a
pleasant scent. All tribu-
lations are thorns to
flesh and blood (the
word imports as much)
yet as Sanctified to Gods
children in Christ they
become of excellent use,
increasing their grace
here and glory hereafter;

Lynnen

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• Lynnen new washt
though it may dry more
by day time, is obſerved
to whiten more in a fair
night; Adverſity ſanctifi-
ed to a Christian ſoule
doth more improve the
ſame in purity and piety,
then the conſtant enjoy-
ing of a proſperous con-
dition.

14 But we need goe
no further for the proof
of the great profit gotten
by Gods ſervice, then to
the words of the Apo-
ſtle. *Godlinesse hath the pro-
mise of the life which now is,
and of that which is to come.*

¹ Tim. 4.
8.

It

of Contentment.

It is reported of *Alexander*,
that having conquered
the World, he wept be-
cause there was no more
left for his valour to o-
vercome: But least Gods
children should have any
cause of discontentment,
that their joy may have
room enough to dilate it
self in, see a life and a life,
a vworld and a vworld,
one here and another
hereafter, one in posses-
sion, another in reversion
alotted unto them.

15 Come we now to
the present payment, is,
Even at this present in-
stant,

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stant, God hath done great things for us already, whereof we rejoice. Excellent is the expression of the Apostle.

^{1 Cor. 3.} Or things present, or things to

^{22.}

come, All are yours. Here some carping curious Criticks may challenge St. Paul of impropriety of language; yea, finde both false grammar and Logick in his words, false Tense, to lay future things are, false Logick, for how can things to come be ours, which be not. But know St. Paul spake with languages more then them all, and had no need to learn the con-

^{1 Cor. 14}
18.

of Contentment.

congruity of construction from any other. It is good in law to say, This reversion is mine because the reversioner is in present possession of the right to it, though not of the profit by it; yea, heaven on earth is actually ours already; the possession of a clear conscience, and the spirit of adoption signs and seals unto us the favour of God, then which, no greater gain.

16 And now as the Eunuch said to Philip, See ^{Act.8.36} here is water, what doth binder me to be baptized, so say I. Behold

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Behold, here is a Bride,
Godlines, ready provided;
A bride maid, *Contentment*,
ready prepared. The
great portion presently
to be paid. What hin-
ders now but the mar-
riage may instantly pro-
ceed, that so we may be
wedded and bedded to-
gether. But what an-
swered *Philip* to the Eu-
nuch? *If thou believest with*
all thine heart, thou maiest be
baptised. So say I. If thou
lovest this Bride with all
thy Soule, counting no-
thing too dear to obtain
her, the marriages solem-
nities

Acts 8.
37.

of Contentment.

nities may instantly goe on. Oh that I had per-
suasive eloquence ef-
fectually to advance this
match, the best is, what
is vwanting in mee the
spokesman, is plentifully
supplyed in her the
bride.

17. But two things we
must beware of. Take
heed you mistake not the
shaddow for the sub-
stance, the picture for the
person. Saint *Paul* tels
us of some, who have the ^{2 Tim.}
forme of godlinessse, but
deny the power thereof.
The Poets tels us of ma-
ny

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ny who at first were suiters to *Penelope* the Mistresse, but at last were married to the Maids which attended her. It is to be feared that many who pretend to love godlinesse it self, fall at last a courting and woeing of the forme, the meer outside and garb of Religion, and content themselves with the same: wherein an hypocrite may equally, yea exceed the sincerest Saint and servant of God.

Lastly, Beware least thy covetous heart rather

of Contentment.

ther love the Portion
then the Person, have
more minde to the gaine
then the godlines. We
finde how the next kins-
man was very ready to
redeem the parcel of Na-
mies land which was his
brother *Elimelechs*. But as
soon as withall he heard,
hee must take *Ruth* to ^{Ruth. 4.}
wife, he fell back from
his promise and purpose;
Many there be which are
very forward to wed the
gaine, but are utterly un-
willing to have the god-
lines with it. Such a sui-
ter was *Balaam* himself:

D O

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Num.
23.10.

O that I might aye the death of
the righteous, and let my last
end be like his, who was
carelesse to live the lite of
the righteous. But let us
labour to have the sub-
stance and sincerity of
Piety in our hearts,
knowing that we are to
deale with such a God
who prefers a dramme
of integrity before a
pound of protestion;
And if wee acquit our
selves upright in his pre-
sence, godlinesse with
contentment is great
gain unto us. I say god-
linesse in generall not re-
strictively

of Contentment.

strictively engrossed to
some particular party,
but extended according
to the dimension of cha-
rity to all persons agree-
ing in the essentials to sal-
vation; *In my fathers house*
there be many Mansions, as ^{Joh. 14.2}
if God had provided se-
veral repositories of hap-
piness for such as differ
in smaller opinions,
vvhilest all agreeing in
generall godlinessse, may
meet in one grand Hea-
ven and place of eternall
Felicity,

Amen.